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STAN LEE PRESENTS:

PARTS OF A HOLE PART TWO

ECHOES!

DAVID MACK STORY JOE QUESADA ART JIMMY PALMIOTTI INKS
RICHARD ISANOVE COLORS RICHARD STARKINGS/COMICRAFT LETTERS
NANCI DAKESIAN EDITOR KELLY LAMY ASSISTANT EDITOR BOB HARRAS CHIEF

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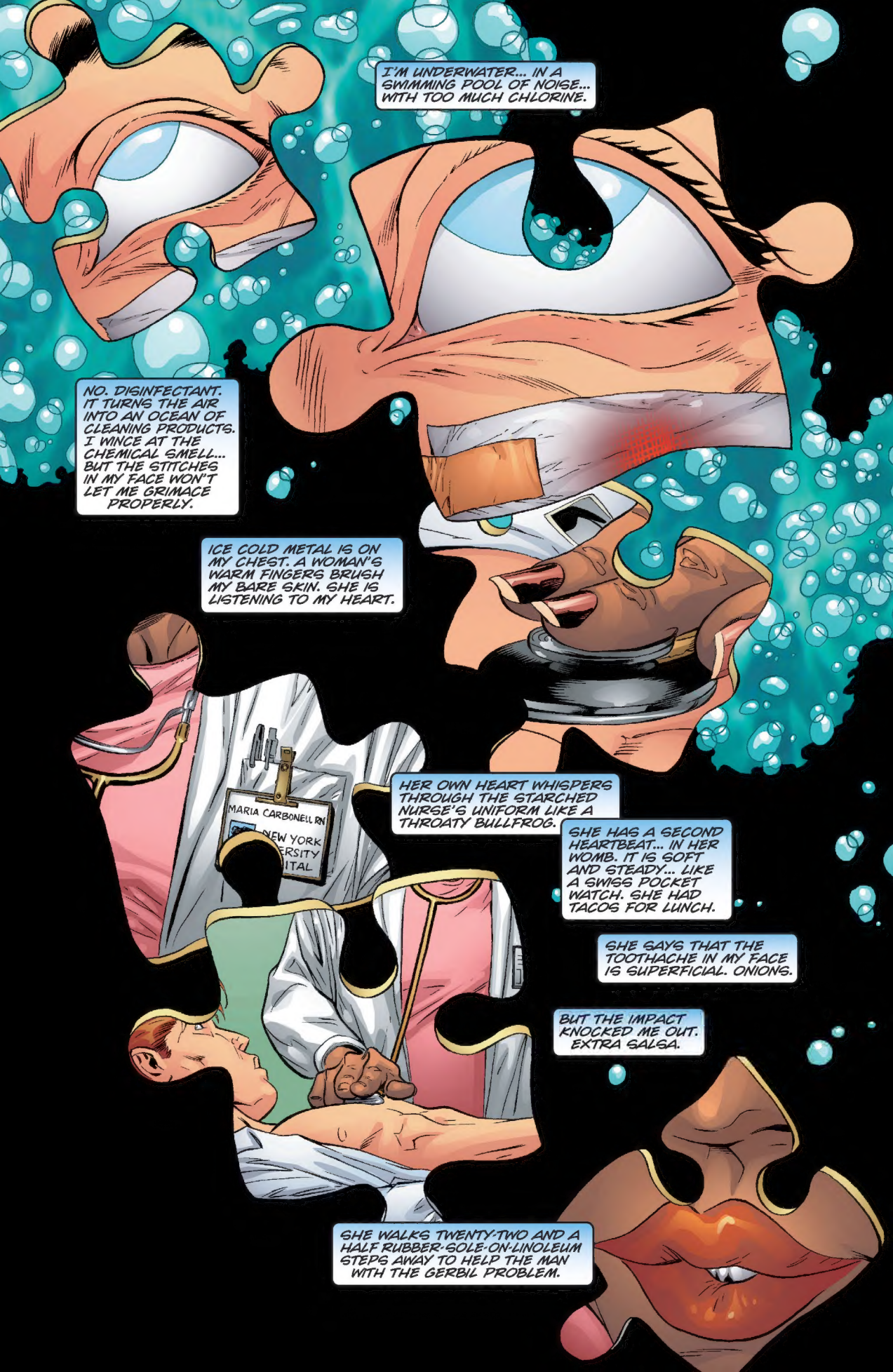
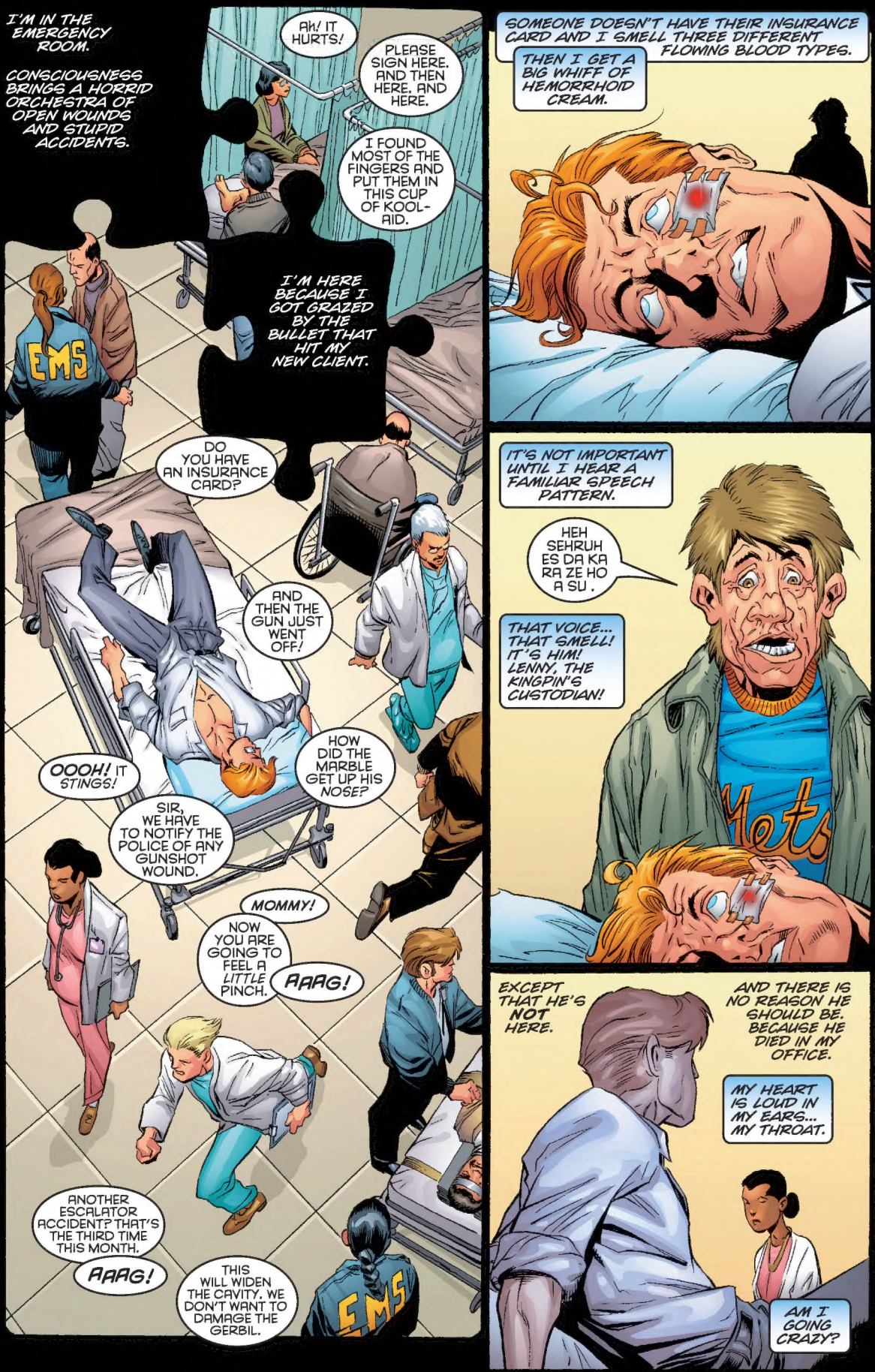
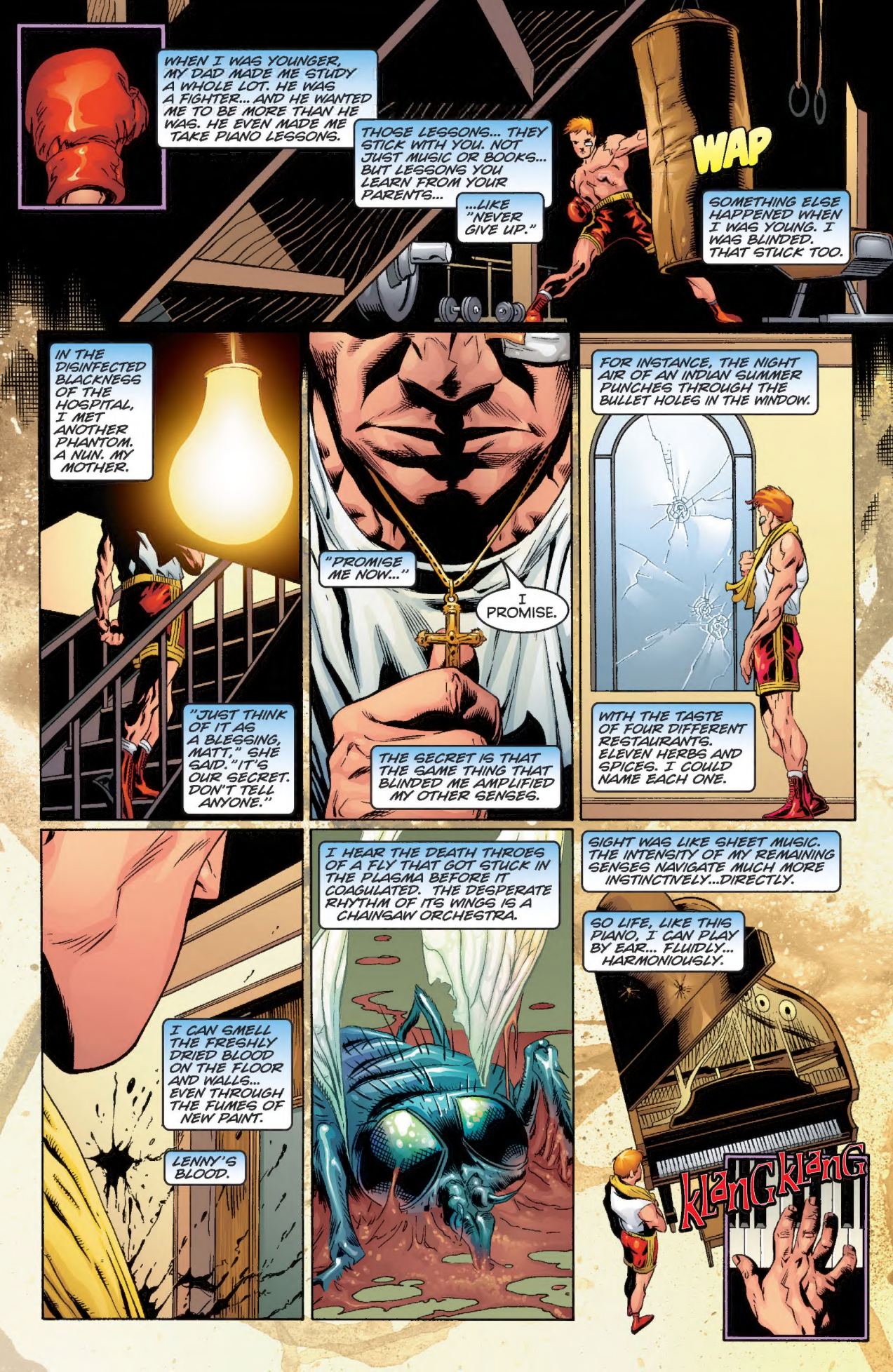
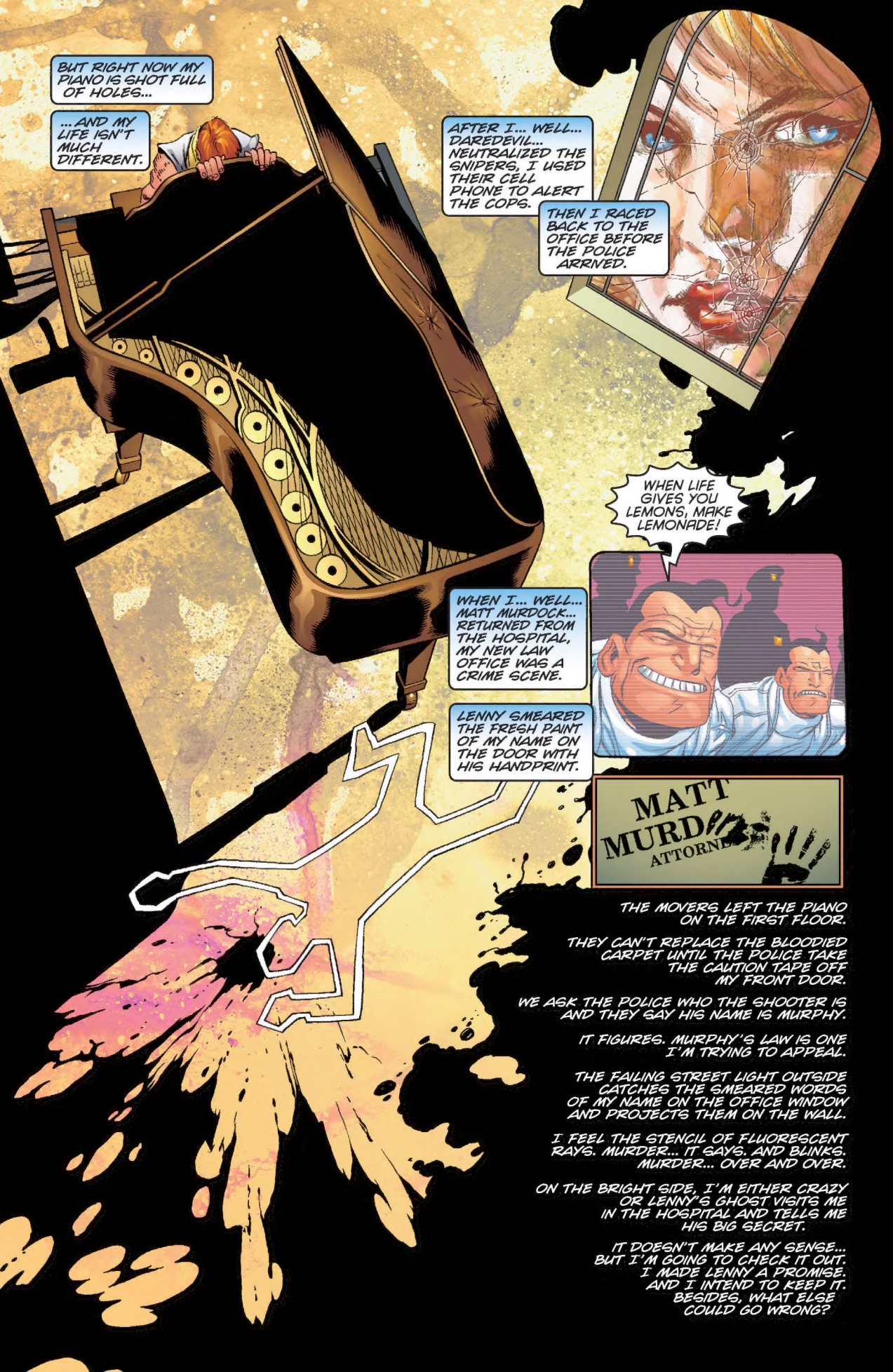

I'M UNDERWATER... IN A SWIMMING POOL OF NOISE... WITH TOO MUCH CHLORINE.
NO. DISINFECTANT. IT TURNS THE AIR INTO AN OCEAN OF CLEANING PRODUCTS. I WINCE AT THE CHEMICAL SMELL... BUT THE STITCHES IN MY FACE WON'T LET ME GRIMACE PROPERLY.
ICE COLD METAL IS ON MY CHEST. A WOMAN'S WARM FINGERS BRUSH MY BARE SKIN. SHE IS LISTENING TO MY HEART.
MARIA CARBONELL RN
HER OWN HEART WHISPERS THROUGH THE STARCHED NURSE'S UNIFORM LIKE A THROATY BULLFROG.
SHE HAS A SECOND HEARTBEAT... IN HER WOMB. IT IS SOFT AND STEADY... LIKE A SWISS POCKET WATCH. SHE HAD TACOS FOR LUNCH.
SHE SAYS THAT THE TOOTHACHE IN MY FACE IS SUPERFICIAL. ONIONS.
BUT THE IMPACT KNOCKED ME OUT. EXTRA SALSA.
SHE WALKS TWENTY-TWO AND A HALF RUBBER-SOLE-ON-LINOLEUM STEPS AWAY TO HELP THE MAN WITH THE GERBIL PROBLEM.


I'M IN THE EMERGENCY ROOM.
CONSCIOUSNESS BRINGS A HORRID ORCHESTRA OF OPEN WOUNDS AND STUPID ACCIDENTS.
Ah! IT HURTS!
PLEASE SIGN HERE. AND THEN HERE. AND HERE.
I FOUND MOST OF THE FINGERS AND PUT THEM IN THIS CUP OF KOOL-AID.
I'M HERE BECAUSE I GOT GRAZED BY THE BULLET THAT HIT MY NEW CLIENT.
EMS
DO YOU HAVE AN INSURANCE CARD?
AND THEN THE GUN JUST WENT OFF!
OOOH! IT STINGS!
HOW DID THE MARBLE GET UP HIS NOSE?
SIR, WE HAVE TO NOTIFY THE POLICE OF ANY GUNSHOT WOUND.
MOMMY!
NOW YOU ARE GOING TO FEEL A LITTLE PINCH.
AAAG!
ANOTHER ESCALATOR ACCIDENT? THAT'S THE THIRD TIME THIS MONTH.
AAAG!
THIS WILL WIDEN THE CAVITY. WE DON'T WANT TO DAMAGE THE GERBIL.
EMS
SOMEONE DOESN'T HAVE THEIR INSURANCE CARD AND I SMELL THREE DIFFERENT FLOWING BLOOD TYPES.
THEN I GET A BIG WHIFF OF HEMORRHOID CREAM.
IT'S NOT IMPORTANT UNTIL I HEAR A FAMILIAR SPEECH PATTERN.
HEH SEHRUH ES DA KA RA ZE HO A SU.
THAT VOICE... THAT SMELL! IT'S HIM! LENNY, THE KINGPIN'S CUSTODIAN!
Mets
EXCEPT THAT HE'S NOT HERE.
AND THERE IS NO REASON HE SHOULD BE. BECAUSE HE DIED IN MY OFFICE.
MY HEART IS LOUD IN MY EARS... MY THROAT.
AM I GOING CRAZY?


WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, MY DAD MADE ME STUDY A WHOLE LOT. HE WAS A FIGHTER... AND HE WANTED ME TO BE MORE THAN HE WAS. HE EVEN MADE ME TAKE PIANO LESSONS.
THOSE LESSONS... THEY STICK WITH YOU. NOT JUST MUSIC OR BOOKS... BUT LESSONS YOU LEARN FROM YOUR PARENTS...
...LIKE "NEVER GIVE UP."
WAP
SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENED WHEN I WAS YOUNG. I WAS BLINDED. THAT STUCK TOO.
IN THE DISINFECTED BLACKNESS OF THE HOSPITAL, I MET ANOTHER PHANTOM. A NUN. MY MOTHER.
"JUST THINK OF IT AS A BLESSING, MATT," SHE SAID. "IT'S OUR SECRET. DON'T TELL ANYONE."
"PROMISE ME NOW..."
I PROMISE.
THE SECRET IS THAT THE SAME THING THAT BLINDED ME AMPLIFIED MY OTHER SENSES.
FOR INSTANCE, THE NIGHT AIR OF AN INDIAN SUMMER PUNCHES THROUGH THE BULLET HOLES IN THE WINDOW.
WITH THE TASTE OF FOUR DIFFERENT RESTAURANTS. ELEVEN HERBS AND SPICES. I COULD NAME EACH ONE.
I CAN SMELL THE FRESHLY DRIED BLOOD ON THE FLOOR AND WALLS... EVEN THROUGH THE FUMES OF NEW PAINT.
LENNY'S BLOOD.
I HEAR THE DEATH THROES OF A FLY THAT GOT STUCK IN THE PLASMA BEFORE IT COAGULATED. THE DESPERATE RHYTHM OF ITS WINGS IS A CHAINSAW ORCHESTRA.
SIGHT WAS LIKE SHEET MUSIC. THE INTENSITY OF MY REMAINING SENSES NAVIGATE MUCH MORE INSTINCTIVELY...DIRECTLY.
SO LIFE, LIKE THIS PIANO, I CAN PLAY BY EAR... FLUIDLY... HARMONIOUSLY.
klanGklanG


BUT RIGHT NOW MY PIANO IS SHOT FULL OF HOLES...
...AND MY LIFE ISN'T MUCH DIFFERENT.
AFTER I... WELL... DAREDEVIL... NEUTRALIZED THE SNIPERS, I USED THEIR CELL PHONE TO ALERT THE COPS.
THEN I RACED BACK TO THE OFFICE BEFORE THE POLICE ARRIVED.
WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, MAKE LEMONADE!
WHEN I... WELL... MATT MURDOCK... RETURNED FROM THE HOSPITAL, MY NEW LAW OFFICE WAS A CRIME SCENE.
LENNY SMEARED THE FRESH PAINT OF MY NAME ON THE DOOR WITH HIS HANDPRINT.
MATT
MURD
ATTORN
THE MOVERS LEFT THE PIANO ON THE FIRST FLOOR.
THEY CAN'T REPLACE THE BLOODIED CARPET UNTIL THE POLICE TAKE THE CAUTION TAPE OFF MY FRONT DOOR.
WE ASK THE POLICE WHO THE SHOOTER IS AND THEY SAY HIS NAME IS MURPHY.
IT FIGURES. MURPHY'S LAW IS ONE I'M TRYING TO APPEAL.
THE FAILING STREET LIGHT OUTSIDE CATCHES THE SMEARED WORDS OF MY NAME ON THE OFFICE WINDOW AND PROJECTS THEM ON THE WALL.
I FEEL THE STENCIL OF FLUORESCENT RAYS. MURDER... IT SAYS. AND BLINKS. MURDER... OVER AND OVER.
ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, I'M EITHER CRAZY OR LENNY'S GHOST VISITS ME IN THE HOSPITAL AND TELLS ME HIS BIG SECRET.
IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE... BUT I'M GOING TO CHECK IT OUT. I MADE LENNY A PROMISE. AND I INTEND TO KEEP IT. BESIDES, WHAT ELSE COULD GO WRONG?

BEEEEEP
SCRRREEEE
NOT EVERYONE CAN STOP NEW YORK TRAFFIC.
KRASH
SHE DOES.
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, LADY!
WHAT ARE YOU, DEAF?!
SHE DOESN'T HEAR THEM YELLING. SHE DOESN'T HEAR THE TRAFFIC AT ALL.
MAYA, I NEED A FAVOR OF YOU.
MR. FISK TOLD ME THAT A GOOD BUT MISGUIDED LAWYER BELIEVES HIM TO BE INVOLVED IN SOMETHING BAD.
HE ASKS IF I WILL SPEAK TO THE LAWYER. HE COULD HAVE HIS ATTORNEYS DO IT, BUT HE SAYS THAT THIS MAN WILL RELATE TO ME. HE SAYS THAT HE WILL KNOW I'M NOT LYING.
A BASKETBALL CLEARS THE FENCE. SHE TOSSES IT RIGHT BACK TO THE KIDS ON THE COURT. AND MAKES THE BASKET. IT'S AN EXACT REPLAY OF THE SHOT THAT WON LAST NIGHT'S KNICKS GAME. IT'S A ONE IN A MILLION SHOT.
THE KIDS TOSS THE BALL BACK TO HER AND SHE DOES IT AGAIN.

I WAKE UP LATE...
...TO FINGERS ON A KEYBOARD...
...HAMMERING IN MY HEAD.
IN MY DREAM IT'S TYPING OUT LENNY'S LAST WORDS.
GOOD MORNING, MATT.
I HOPE I DIDN'T WAKE YOU. THE DOC SAID YOU SHOULD TAKE IT EASY.
I'M JUST GETTING A JUMP ON THE LENNY CASE. THE PLAN IS TO BUILD ENOUGH EVIDENCE ON MURPHY TO CONVINCE HIM TO MAKE A DEAL AND TURN EVIDENCE ON FISK.
GOSH, WHERE ARE MY MANNERS. MATT, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I THINK SO.
IT'S JUST THAT I WAS SURE LENNY SPOKE TO ME AT THE HOSP-- UH?
I MEAN, FOR A SECOND I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!

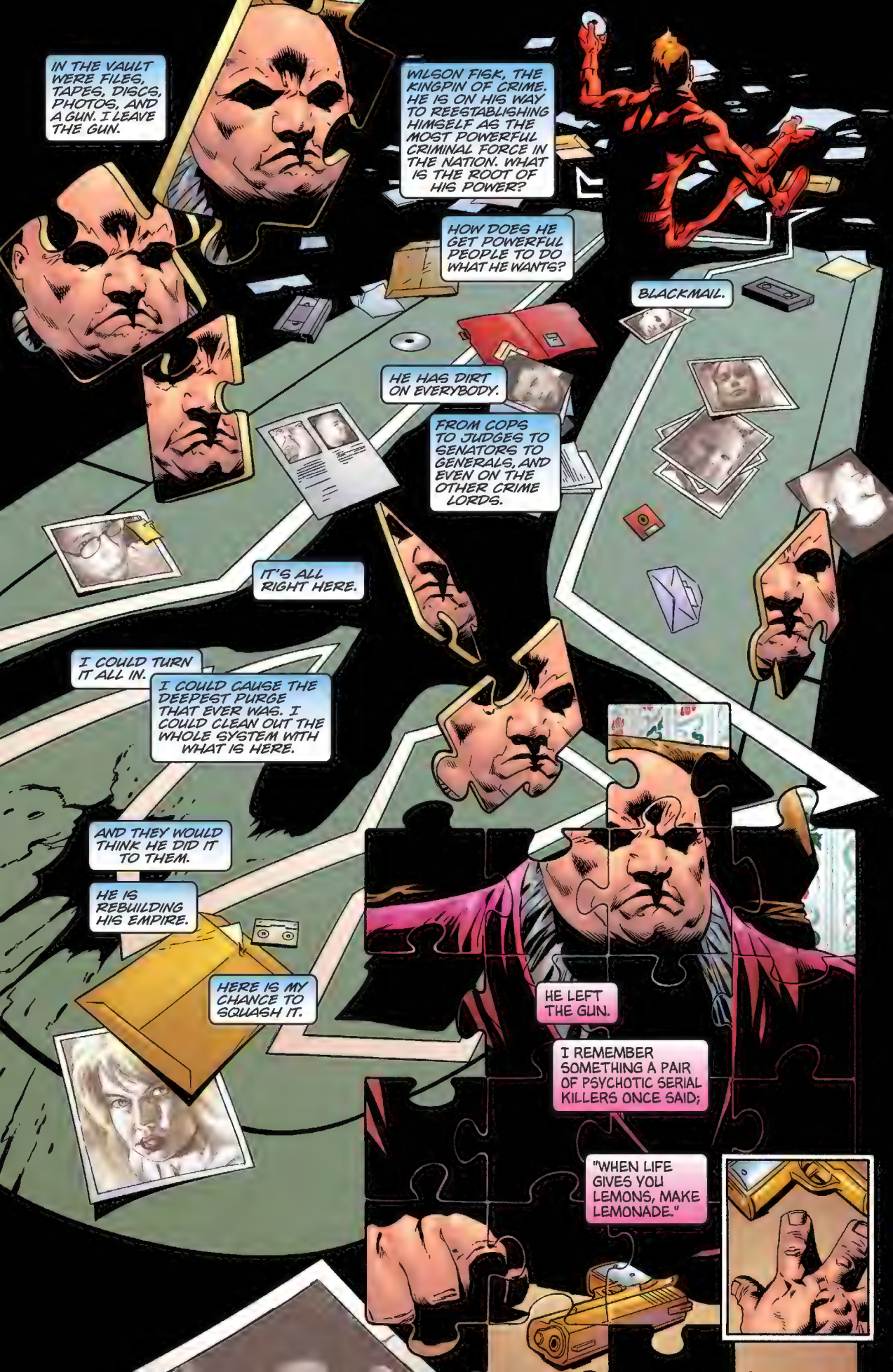
WHAT WOULD I *DO* IF YOU WERE DEAD? YOU'RE MY ***BEST*** FRIEND. YOU WERE THERE FOR ME WHEN NO ONE ELSE WAS. NOT EVEN ROSALIND SHARPE, MY OWN *MOTHER.*
WHEN HE STARTS CRYING, HE DOES IT LONG AND HARD AND DOESN'T STOP.
HIS NOSE BLOWS LITTLE BUBBLES THAT POP ON MY NECK AS HE SOBS THE WORDS AS BEST HE CAN. I MAKE OUT A FEW OF THEM.
"THE NEW LAW OFFICE... A SECOND CHANCE".
YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND TOO, FOGGY.
SOMEONE AT THE DOOR.
UH... I'M SORRY ... ARE YOU *OPEN* NOW? I SAW ON THE DOOR IT SAID...
UH... DID I INTERRUPT ANYTHING?
EXCUSE ME, I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING.
UH... NO. HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?
I DON'T HAVE AN APPOINTMENT. I'M DEAF, SO I DIDN'T CALL.
I HAVEN'T UNLOCKED THE SECRETS OF THE TELEPHONE.
BUT I WAS HOPING THAT I COULD SPEAK TO A MISTER *MURDOCK.*
IS HE YOUR *BOYFRIEND?* THE ONE WHO JUST RAN OFF?

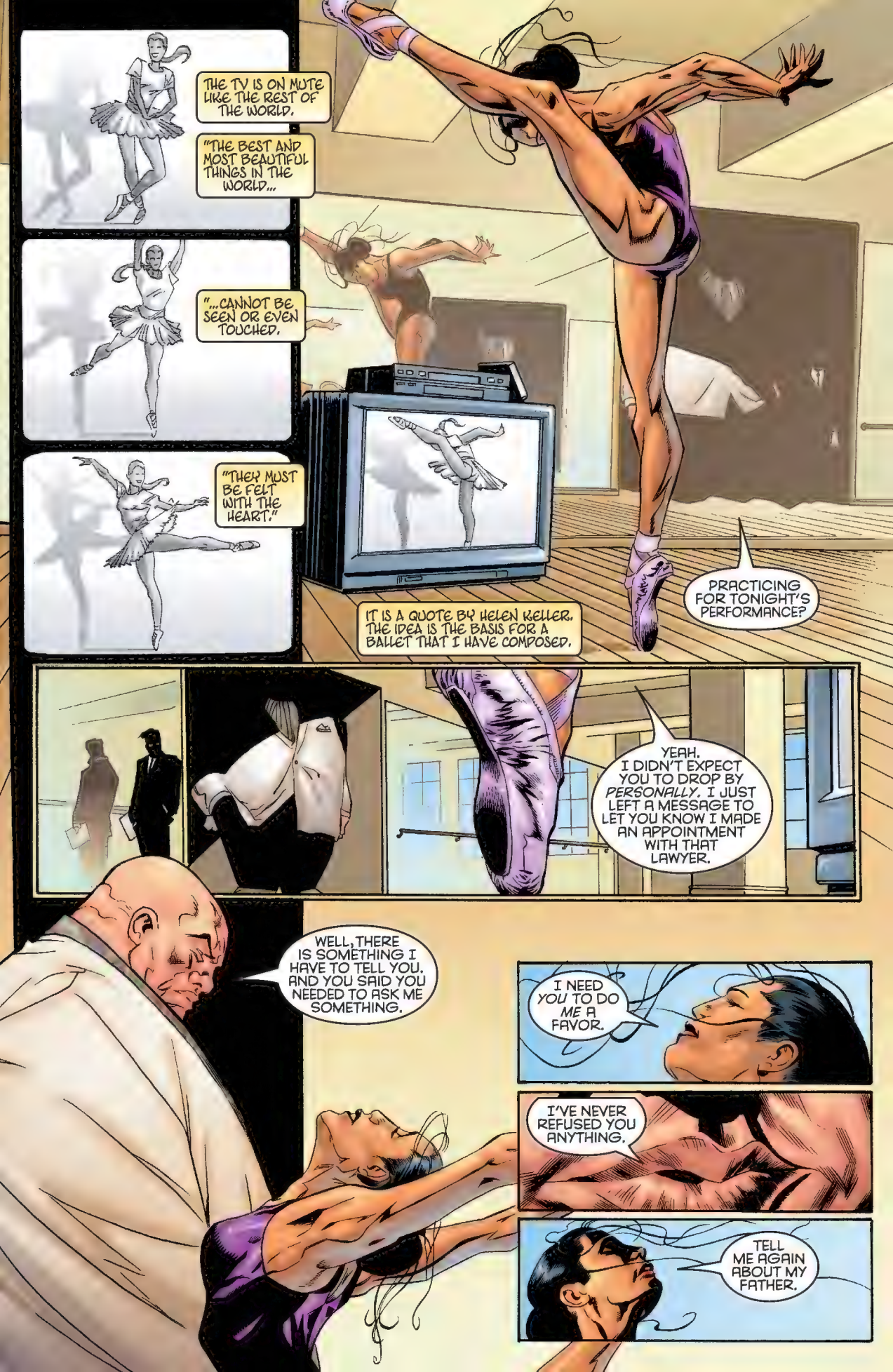
NO. NO. HE'S JUST MY FRIEND. I MEAN, FOGGY... THAT MAN, IS MY FRIEND... I MEAN, I'M NOT... IT'S NOT WHAT YOU...
...I MEAN, I'M MISTER MURDOCK.
YOU'RE MISTER MURDOCK?
I'D ASK YOU TO STEP INTO MY OFFICE BUT IT'S NOT REALLY... IT'S IN A... TRANSITIONAL STATE.
OH, YOU HAVE AN OLD BALDWIN!
MATT MURDOCK ATTORNEY
PLEASE DON'T GO IN THERE.
IDIOT! SHE'S DEAF. SHE CAN'T READ LIPS IF SHE'S NOT LOOKING.
SHE'S DEAF? SHE PLAYS IN A MANNER THAT I'VE ONLY HEARD ON TV. IT'S AMAZING... UNTIL SHE HITS THE KEYS THAT THE BULLETS AFFECTED.
KLANG KLANG KLANG

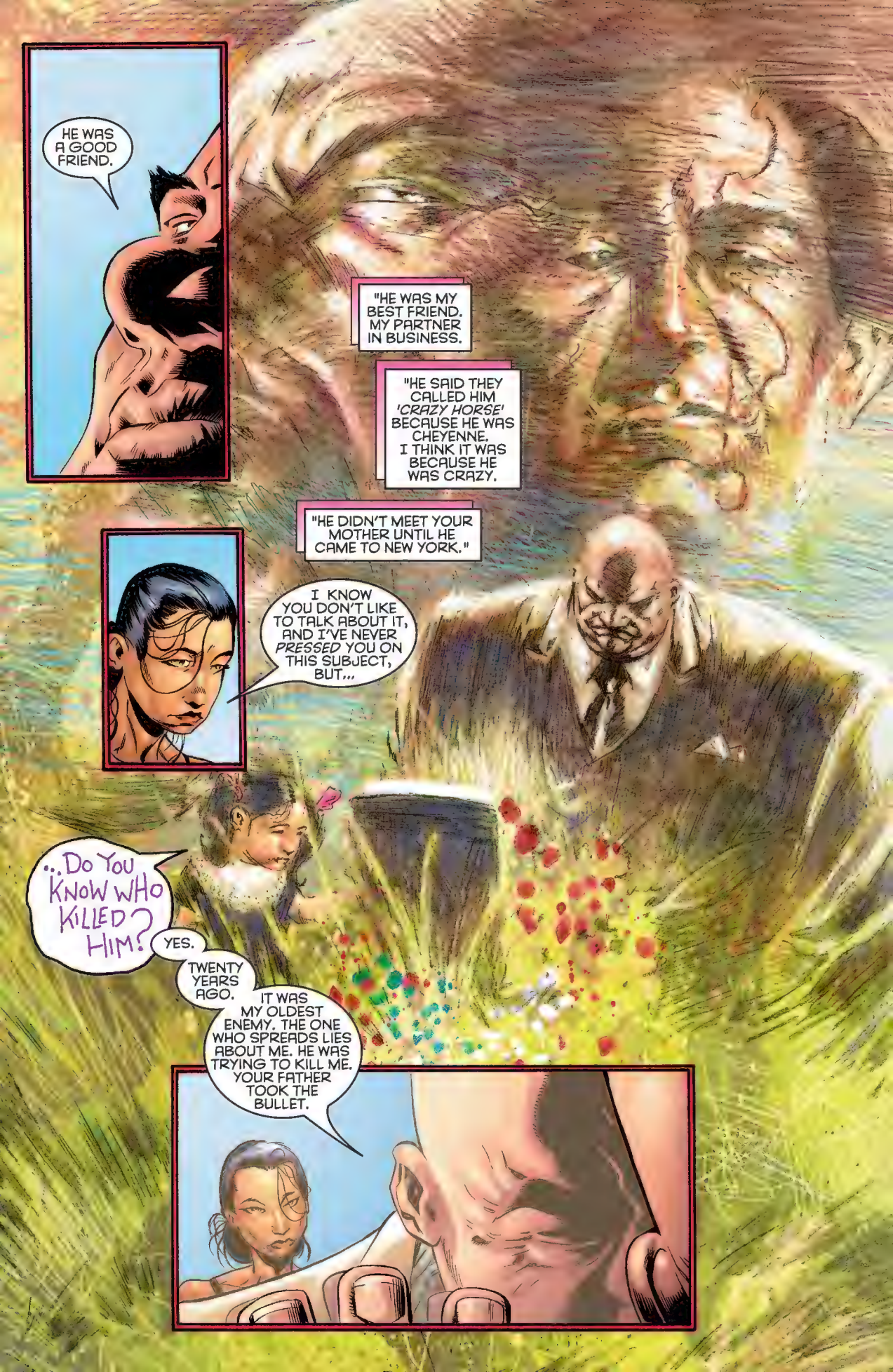
YOUR PIANO'S BROKEN.
I KNOW.
WHAT IS THAT?
I'M BLIND. YOU'LL HAVE TO BE MORE SPECIFIC.
OKAY. WHAT IS THAT CONTORTED WHITE OUTLINE OF A PERSON WITH THE LARGE AMOUNT OF RED FLUID?
JUST THEN FOGGY STICKS HIS HEAD IN THE DOOR AND ASKS IF SHE IS GONE YET.
I CAN SEE THAT I'M INTERRUPTING SOMETHING. YOU RUN A VERY INTERESTING LAW PRACTICE, MISTER MURDOCK.
THAT IS... WAS OUR LAST... CLIENT.
I HAVE A PERFORMANCE AT N.Y.U. TOMORROW MORNING. MEET ME AFTERWARDS AND WE WILL TALK OVER COFFEE.
IT'S IN REGARDS TO WILSON FISK.
WILSON FISK? THE KINGPIN?
DID SHE SAY "I HAVEN'T UNLOCKED THE SECRET OF THE TELEPHONE?"

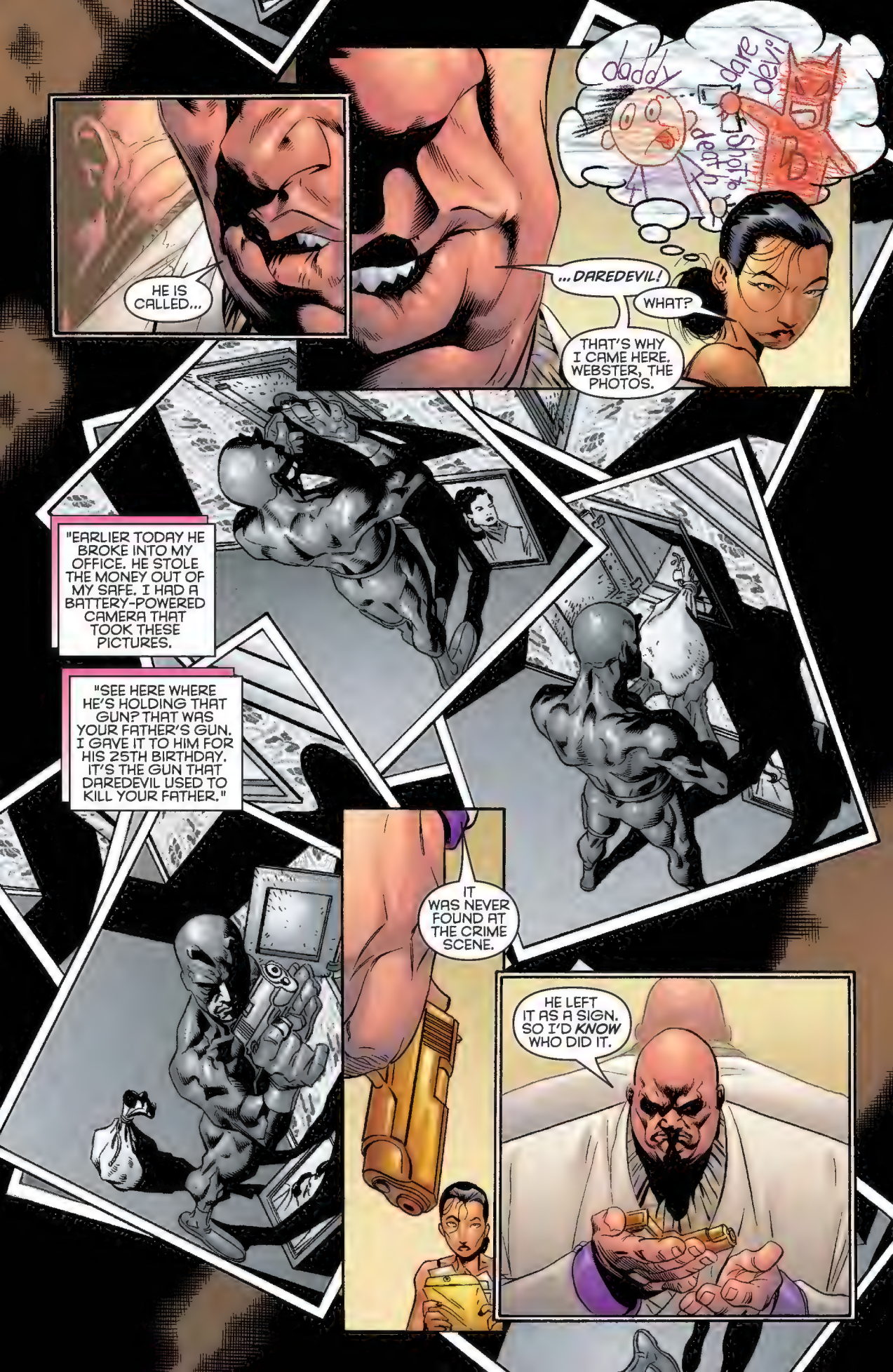
THE PIECES COME UNGLUED.
WITH SLOW, AWKWARD STEPS THEY REARRANGE THEMSELVES... AND A NEW ORDER EMERGES.
CRAZY HORSE HAS TEN LETTERS. IT'S NOT A PHONE NUMBER.
THE WORDS ARE PRINTED IN MY HEAD WITH THE CLARITY OF A TYPEWRITER.
I'VE BEEN THINKING OF THIS AS A METAPHOR. NOT IN A LITERAL SENSE. NOT IN THE WAY A SIGHTED MAN WOULD SEE IT.
I'VE INFILTRATED FISK'S BUILDING BEFORE. SCALED IT... FOR STORIES... ON THE SIDE WITH NO WINDOWS TO AVOID GUARDS AND CAMERAS. IT ALMOST KILLED ME.
NOT THIS TIME.
I USE MY BLINDNESS TO MY ADVANTAGE.
I TAKE OUT THE POWER BOX AND MAKE THE WHOLE BUILDING GO BLIND.
LIGHTS, CAMERAS, ELEVATORS, COMPUTERS, ELECTRONIC LOCKS.
THEN I GO RIGHT IN.
I MOVE UP THE STEPS LIKE A SHADOW.
THE SECURITY STAFF FUMBLES ABOUT THE DARK, IN SLOW MOTION.

MY NAME IS MATT MURDOCK.
THIS IS MY WORLD.
AN HOUR LATER I'M BACK AT HOME.
I'M WONDERING HOW HE'LL REACT.
WILL THEY HAVE THE LIGHTS BACK ON YET? IT DOESN'T MATTER.
HE'LL SEE THE DOOR TO HIS OFFICE OPEN.
THE KINGPIN WILL SEE THE PICTURE OF VANESSA, HIS WIFE. BUT IT WILL BE ON THE FLOOR, NOT ON THE WALL.
AND THE VAULT THAT WAS BEHIND IT...
THE ONE WITH THE NUMBER COMBINATION THAT CORRESPONDS TO THE LETTERS IN CRAZY HORSE...
...WILL BE OPENED.
HE WON'T BE HAPPY.
BUT HE WILL KNOW WHO DID IT. THE "BLINDING" OF THE BUILDING WILL BE A DEAD GIVEAWAY.
MURDOCK!

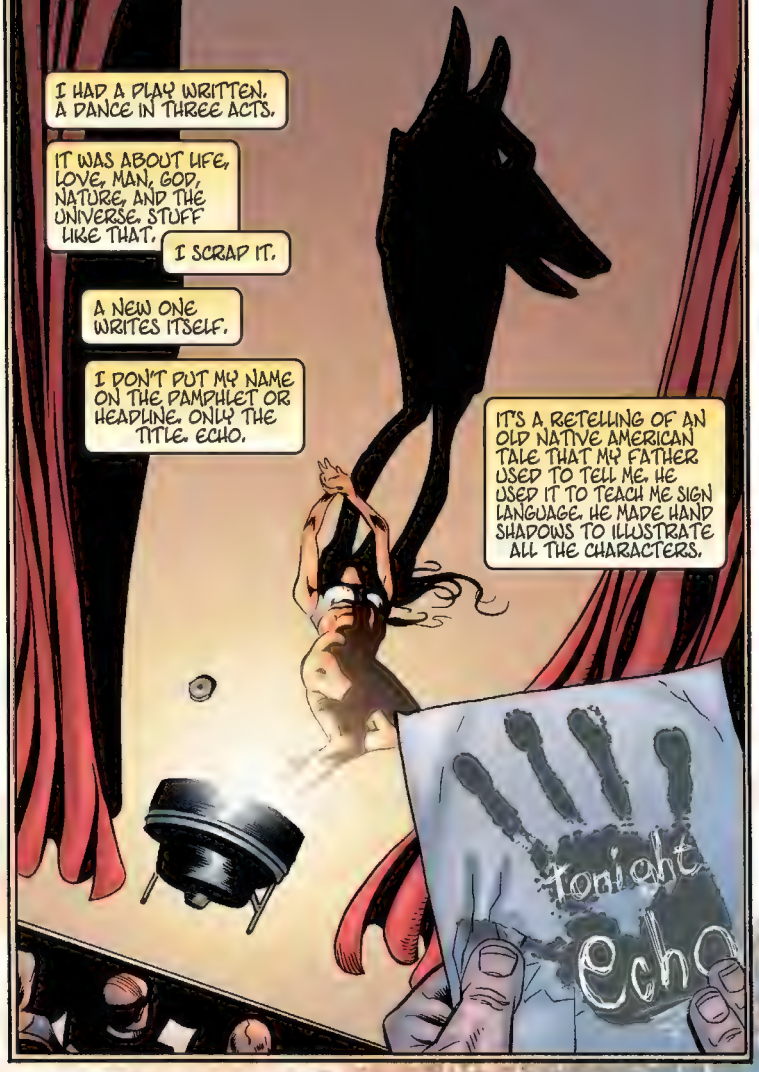

IN THE VAULT WERE FILES, TAPES, DISCS, PHOTOS, AND A GUN. I LEAVE THE GUN.
WILSON FISK, THE KINGPIN OF CRIME. HE IS ON HIS WAY TO REESTABLISHING HIMSELF AS THE MOST POWERFUL CRIMINAL FORCE IN THE NATION. WHAT IS THE ROOT OF HIS POWER?
HOW DOES HE GET POWERFUL PEOPLE TO DO WHAT HE WANTS?
BLACKMAIL.
HE HAS DIRT ON EVERYBODY.
FROM COPS TO JUDGES TO SENATORS TO GENERALS, AND EVEN ON THE OTHER CRIME LORDS.
IT'S ALL RIGHT HERE.
I COULD TURN IT ALL IN.
I COULD CAUSE THE DEEPEST PURGE THAT EVER WAS. I COULD CLEAN OUT THE WHOLE SYSTEM WITH WHAT IS HERE.
AND THEY WOULD THINK HE DID IT TO THEM.
HE IS REBUILDING HIS EMPIRE.
HERE IS MY CHANCE TO SQUASH IT.
HE LEFT THE GUN.
I REMEMBER SOMETHING A PAIR OF PSYCHOTIC SERIAL KILLERS ONCE SAID;
"WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, MAKE LEMONADE."

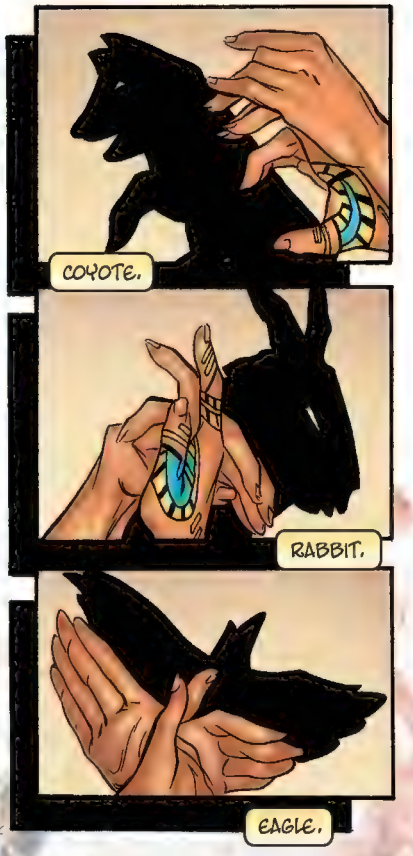

THE TV IS ON MUTE LIKE THE REST OF THE WORLD.
"THE BEST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL THINGS IN THE WORLD...
"...CANNOT BE SEEN OR EVEN TOUCHED.
"THEY MUST BE FELT WITH THE HEART."
IT IS A QUOTE BY HELEN KELLER. THE IDEA IS THE BASIS FOR A BALLET THAT I HAVE COMPOSED.
PRACTICING FOR TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE?
YEAH. I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO DROP BY *PERSONALLY*. I JUST LEFT A MESSAGE TO LET YOU KNOW I MADE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THAT LAWYER.
WELL, THERE IS SOMETHING I HAVE TO TELL YOU. AND YOU SAID YOU NEEDED TO ASK ME SOMETHING.
I NEED *YOU* TO DO *ME* A FAVOR.
I'VE NEVER REFUSED YOU ANYTHING.
TELL ME AGAIN ABOUT MY FATHER.


HE WAS A GOOD FRIEND.
"HE WAS MY BEST FRIEND. MY PARTNER IN BUSINESS.
"HE SAID THEY CALLED HIM 'CRAZY HORSE' BECAUSE HE WAS CHEYENNE. I THINK IT WAS BECAUSE HE WAS CRAZY.
"HE DIDN'T MEET YOUR MOTHER UNTIL HE CAME TO NEW YORK."
I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE TO TALK ABOUT IT, AND I'VE NEVER *PRESSED* YOU ON THIS SUBJECT, BUT...
...DO YOU KNOW WHO KILLED HIM?
YES.
TWENTY YEARS AGO.
IT WAS MY OLDEST ENEMY. THE ONE WHO SPREADS LIES ABOUT ME. HE WAS TRYING TO KILL ME. YOUR FATHER TOOK THE BULLET.

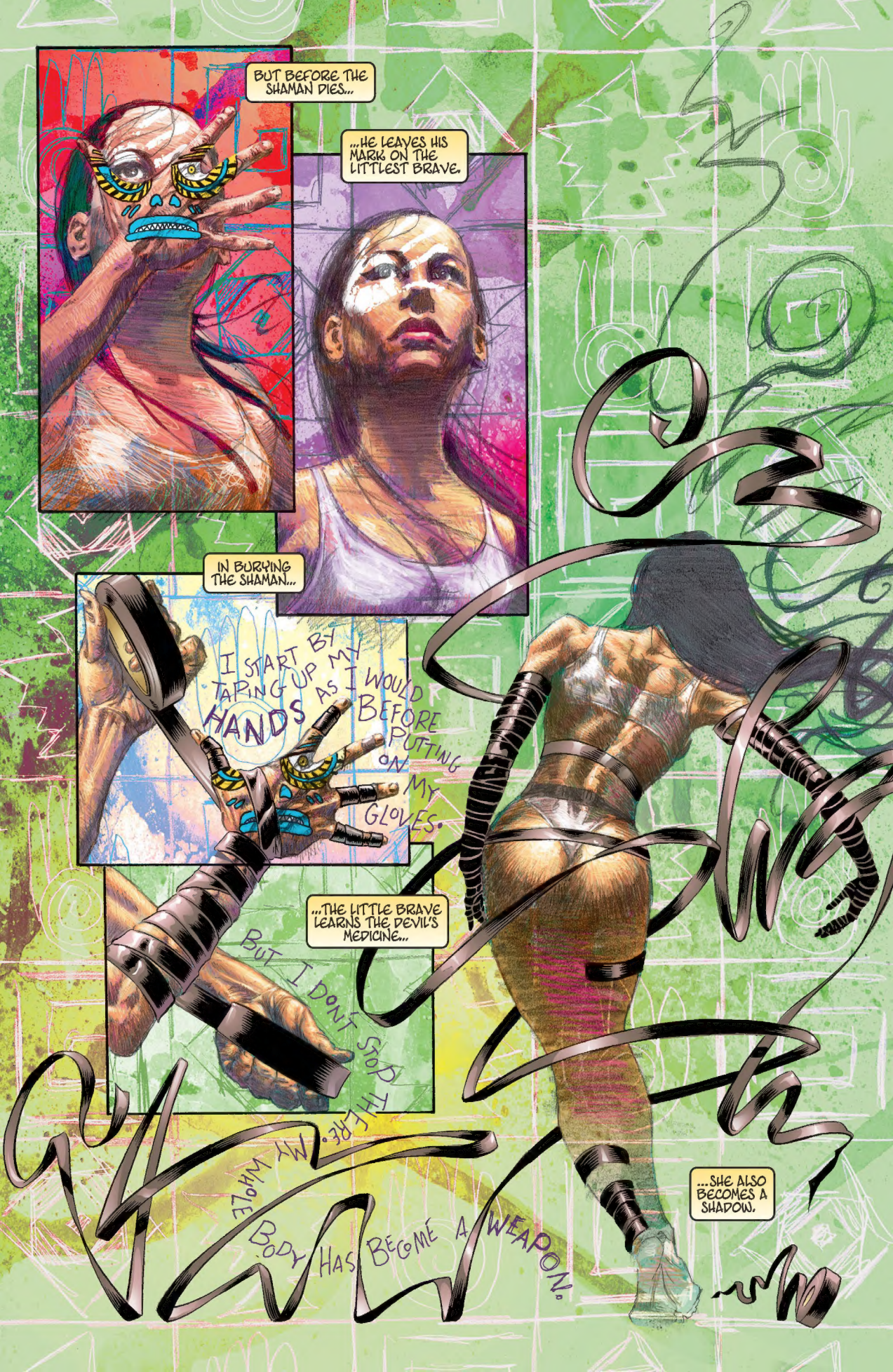

HE IS CALLED...
daddy
dare devil
...DAREDEVIL!
WHAT?
THAT'S WHY I CAME HERE. WEBSTER, THE PHOTOS.
"EARLIER TODAY HE BROKE INTO MY OFFICE. HE STOLE THE MONEY OUT OF MY SAFE. I HAD A BATTERY-POWERED CAMERA THAT TOOK THESE PICTURES.
"SEE HERE WHERE HE'S HOLDING THAT GUN? THAT WAS YOUR FATHER'S GUN. I GAVE IT TO HIM FOR HIS 25TH BIRTHDAY. IT'S THE GUN THAT DAREDEVIL USED TO KILL YOUR FATHER."
IT WAS NEVER FOUND AT THE CRIME SCENE.
HE LEFT IT AS A SIGN. SO I'D *KNOW* WHO DID IT.

HE SAID HE'S WORRIED THAT DAREDEVIL WILL COME AFTER HIM... OR EVEN ME.
HE SAID HE NEEDED TO TELL ME THE TRUTH IN CASE HE WAS KILLED.
HE TOLD ME TO KEEP THE GUN...
...IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER.
HE HAD HIS ASSISTANT LEAVE TAPES OF DAREDEVIL FIGHTING BULLSEYE ON A TELEVISION SHOW.
HE SAID OTHER THINGS BEFORE HE LEFT...
...BUT I STOPPED LOOKING AT HIS LIPS.
I FELT ONLY THE ECHO OF THE PAST...
...THE WEIGHT OF THE GUN.
I TURN THE TV OFF AND STARE AT MY REFLECTION IN THE SCREEN.
I REMEMBER BEING IN THE AMBULANCE WITH MY FATHER.
HE PUTS HIS HAND ON MY FACE.
THE LINE ON THE SCREEN GOES FLAT...
...HIS HAND FALLS LIFELESS...
...AND HE LEAVES ME WITH ONLY HIS ECHO.


I HAD A PLAY WRITTEN. A DANCE IN THREE ACTS.
IT WAS ABOUT LIFE, LOVE, MAN, GOD, NATURE, AND THE UNIVERSE. STUFF LIKE THAT.
I SCRAP IT.
A NEW ONE WRITES ITSELF.
I DON'T PUT MY NAME ON THE PAMPHLET OR HEADLINE. ONLY THE TITLE. ECHO.
IT'S A RETELLING OF AN OLD NATIVE AMERICAN TALE THAT MY FATHER USED TO TELL ME. HE USED IT TO TEACH ME SIGN LANGUAGE. HE MADE HAND SHADOWS TO ILLUSTRATE ALL THE CHARACTERS.
tonight
Echo


COYOTE.
RABBIT.
EAGLE.

A DEVIL KILLS A TRIBAL SHAMAN FOR HIS SHADOW.


BUT BEFORE THE SHAMAN DIES...
...HE LEAVES HIS MARK ON THE LITTLEST BRAVE.
IN BURYING THE SHAMAN...
I START BY TAPING UP MY HANDS AS I WOULD BEFORE PUTTING ON MY GLOVES.
...THE LITTLE BRAVE LEARNS THE DEVIL'S MEDICINE...
BUT I DON'T STOP THERE. MY WHOLE BODY HAS BECOME A WEAPON.
...SHE ALSO BECOMES A SHADOW.

BUT BEFORE THE SHAMAN DIES...
...HE LEAVES HIS MARK ON THE LITTLEST BRAVE.
IN BURYING THE SHAMAN...
...THE LITTLE BRAVE LEARNS THE DEVIL'S MEDICINE...
...SHE ALSO BECOMES A SHADOW.

WHEN I'M FINISHED, THE PEOPLE ARE CLAPPING. OF COURSE, I DON'T HEAR THIS. I JUST SEE ALL THE HANDS HITTING EACH OTHER.
I FEEL THE ECHO.
THE VIBRATION ON MY BODY.
LIKE WAR DRUMS.
I REALIZE THIS PLAY WAS JUST PRACTICE.
TOMORROW I WILL AGAIN WRAP MYSELF IN THE ECHOES OF THE PAST.
BUT THE GUN WILL BE TAPED TO MY BOSOM...
...COLD AGAINST MY SKIN...
...HEAVY AGAINST MY HEART...
...I'M JUST A PART...
...OF A LOST ART.
TOMORROW I WILL KILL DAREDEVIL.
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

TWENTY YEARS AGO...
I CAN STILL FIX THINGS!
YOU'VE GIVEN ME NO CHOICE.
I HELP PUT YOU WHERE YOU ARE!
PROMISE ME THAT WHATEVER HAPPENS...
YOU'LL TAKE CARE OF MY DAUGHTER!
THE RETARDED ONE?
PROMISE!
I PROMISE.
BLAM!
THEY GROW UP SO FAST.